2020

Why was I not Made of Stone.

Ian Callen
Butler University

Why was I not made of Stone.

for string orchestra

by Ian Callen

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Master of Music in Composition in the School of Music
Jordan College of the Arts, Butler University, Indianapolis, IN USA

COMMITTEE

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Prof. Richard Clark (reader) _____

Date (final approval): _____Advisor _____

Why was I not made of Stone.

For String Orchestra

Ian P. Callen

2019

Approximate Duration: 7:30

Program Note

The original inspiration for this work came from Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* when Quasimodo asks the gargoyles on the cathedral "Why was I not made of stone like thee?" as he watches Esmerelda ride off. This piece is an attempt to express the aspect of the human state contained in Quasimodo's words. I found it to be difficult to describe in words, but Arthur Conan Doyle came close in *The Lost World* when he wrote:

> Some believe what separates men from animals is our ability to reason. Others say it's language or romantic love, or opposable thumbs. Living here in this lost world, I've come to believe it is more than our biology. What truly makes us human is our unending search, our abiding desire for immortality.

Quasimodo did not desire immortality, but rather invulnerability. I believe that this piece succeeds in communicating both the innate humanity in the futile search for a state of invulnerability and the intrinsic value and beauty of despair. It is neither optimistic or pessimistic but rides a fine line between the two without being nihilistic. The purpose of tragedy is not to provide some test of character, nor is it always the result of someone's failure. Indeed, just like Quasimodo, sometimes tragedy simply *is* and one must try to bear it without the armor of the gargoyles of Notre Dame.

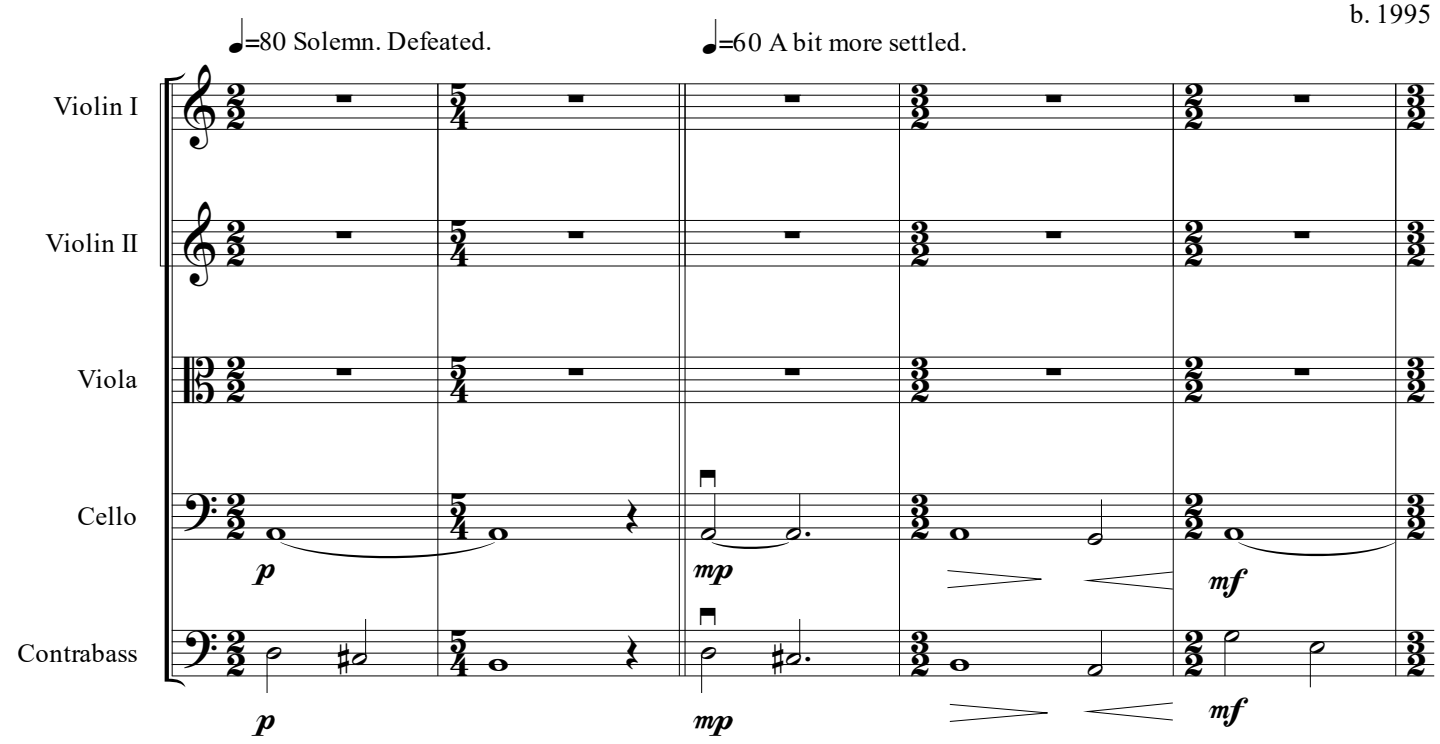
Performance Notes

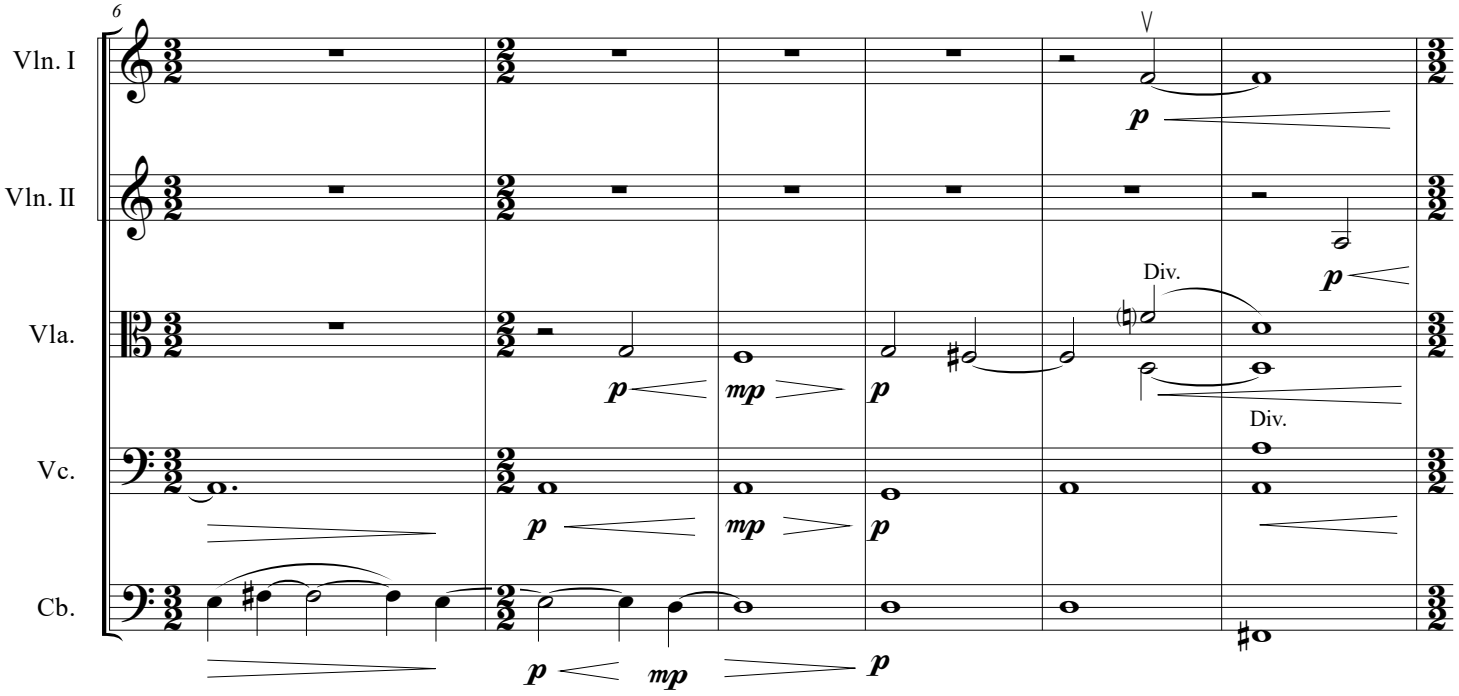
- Any ensemble that performs this piece should consist of a minimum of 16 players (4, 4, 3, 3, 2).
- The choral quality of this work is one of its central characteristics. The treatment of the ensemble as a choir of strings should be considered and reinforced at every level.
- The entire bow should be used for the final chord. If a player runs out of bow prematurely, they should not re-enter. Instead they should freeze in place and wait for the piece to end.

Why was I not made of Stone.

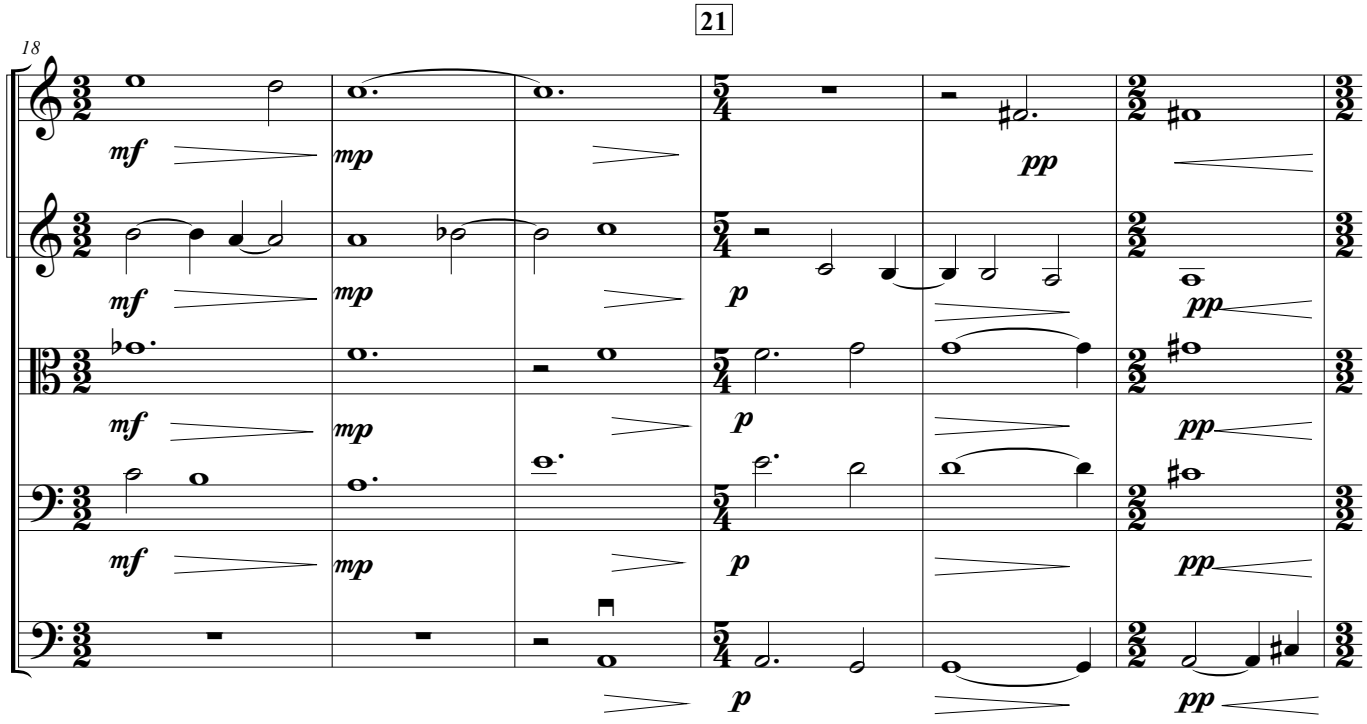
For String Orchestra

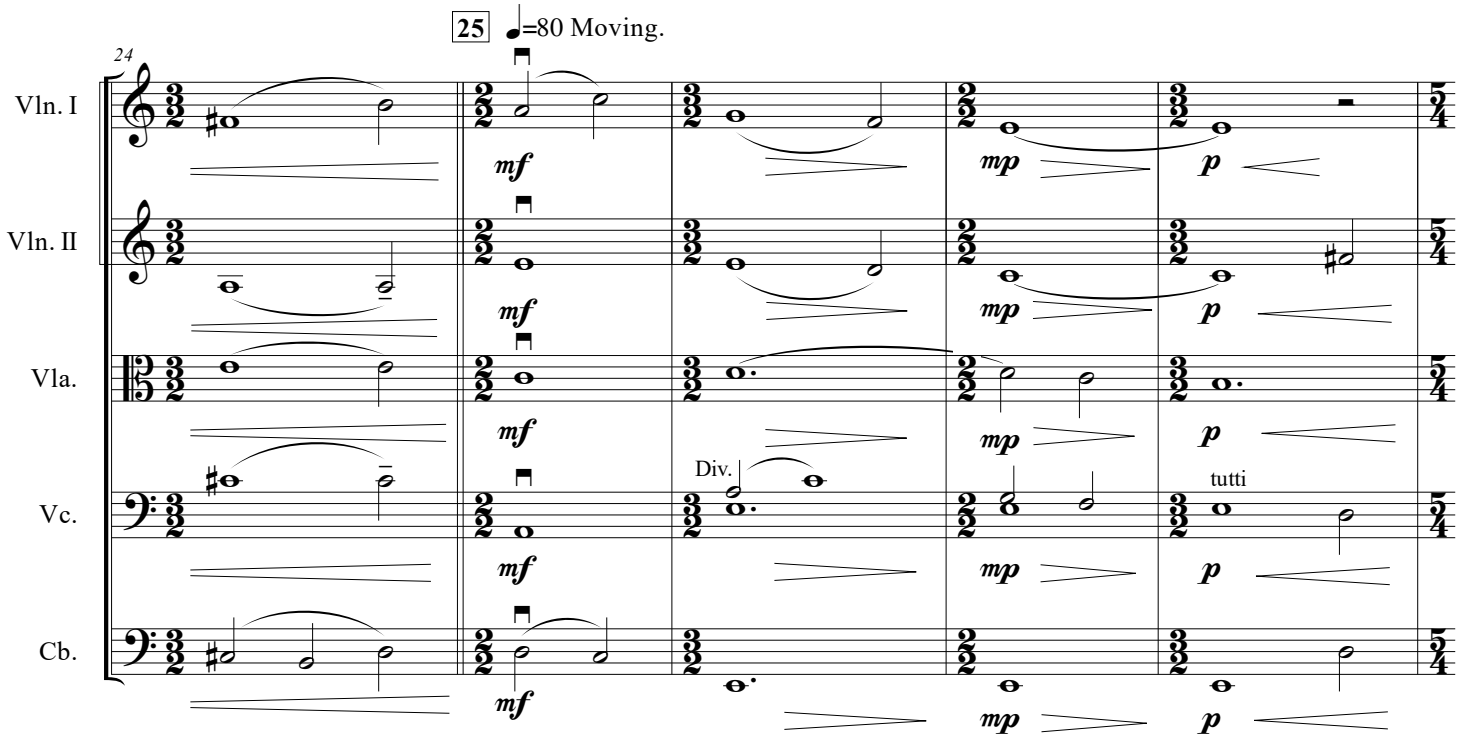
Ian P. Callen
b. 1995

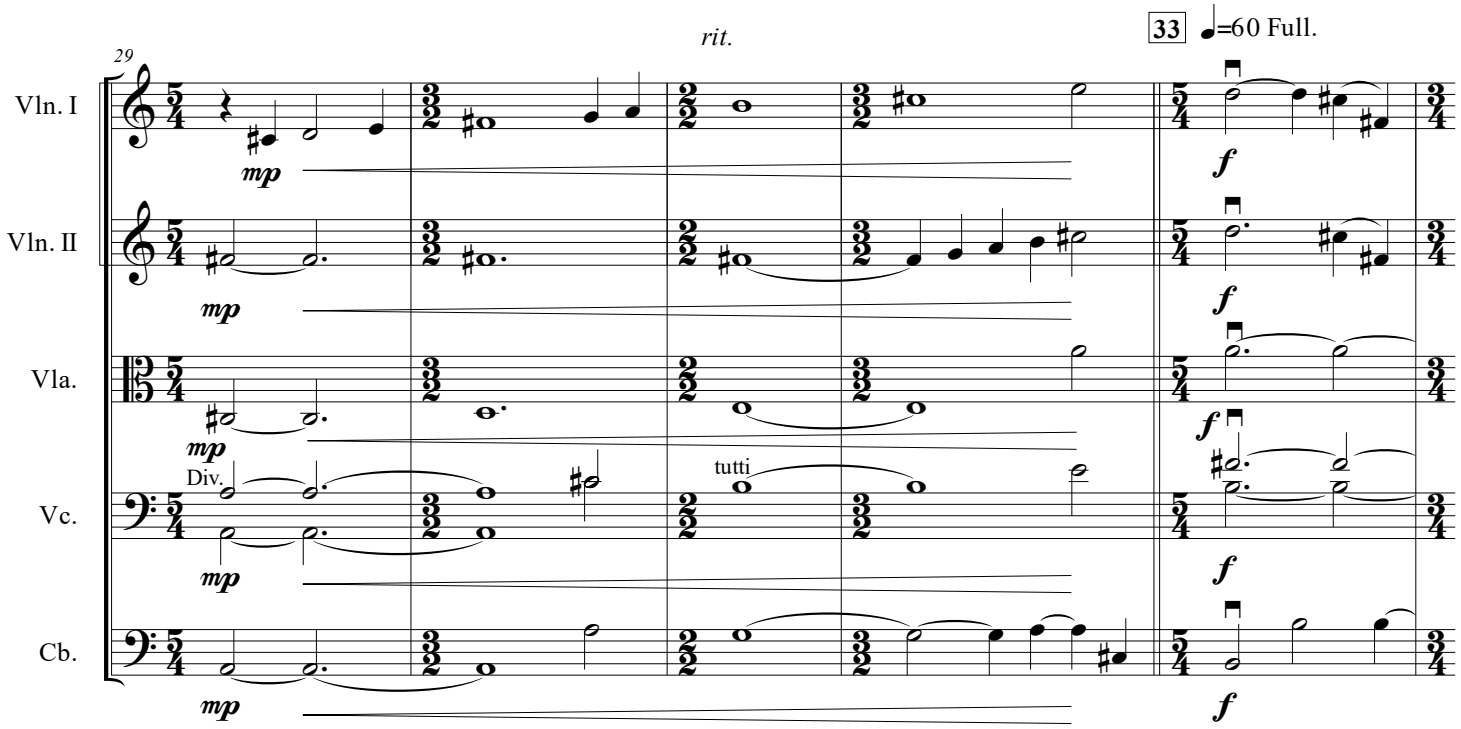


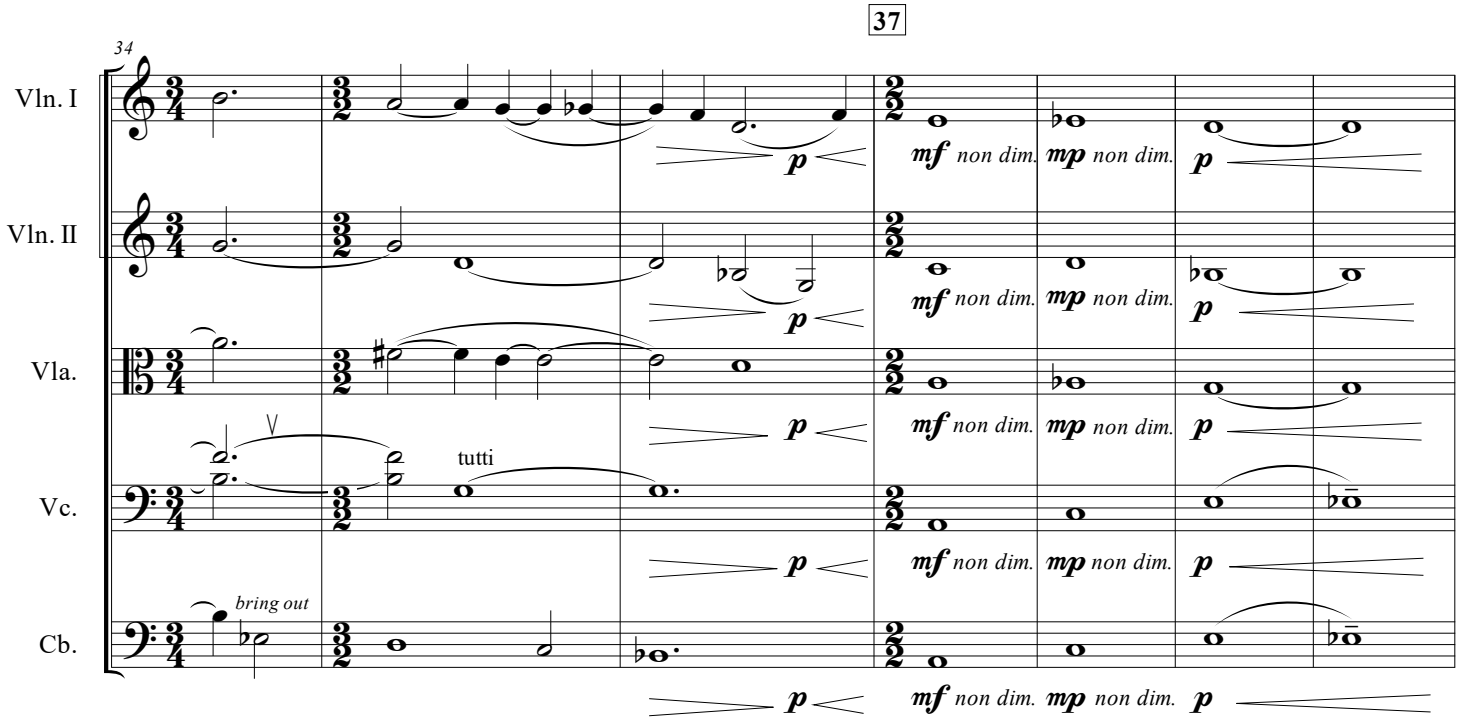


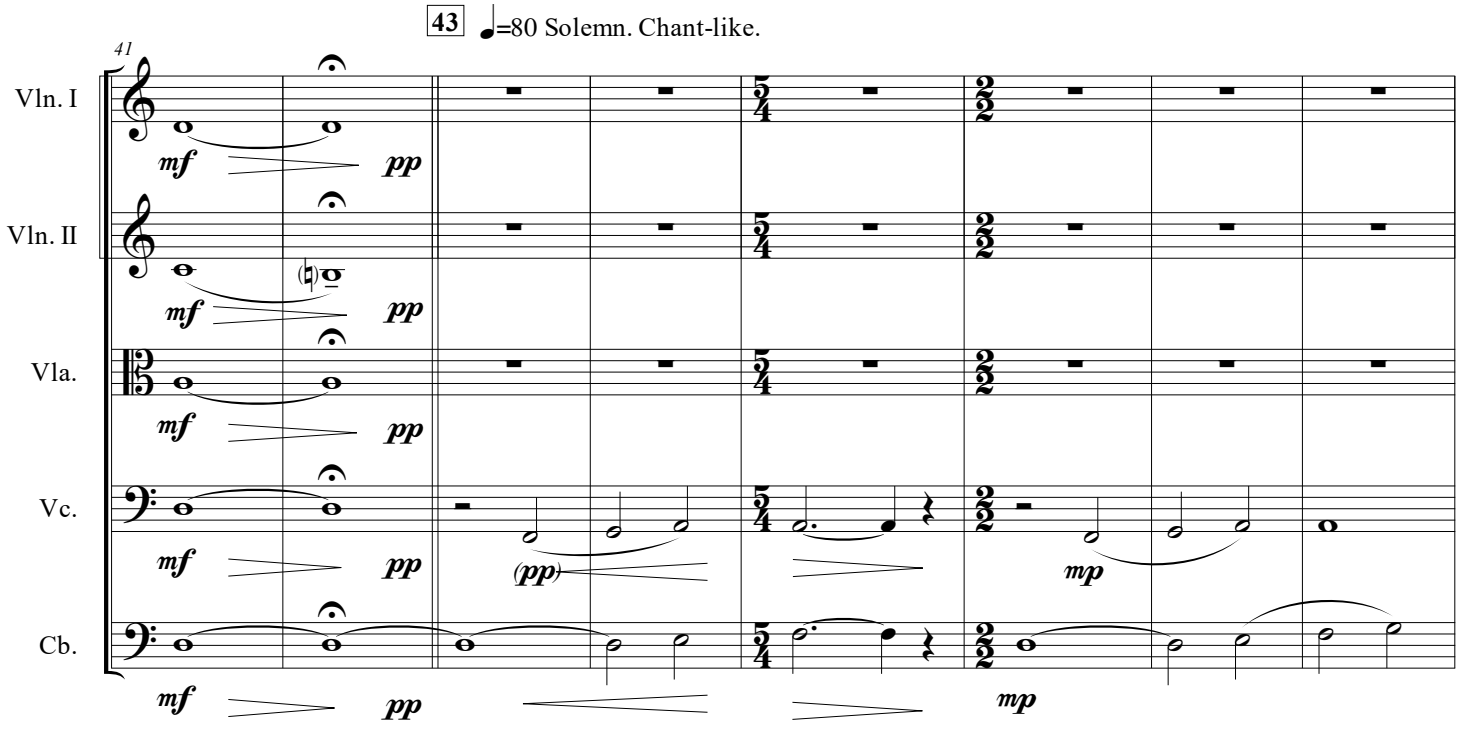

14
12
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
mf
f
tutti
(tutti)

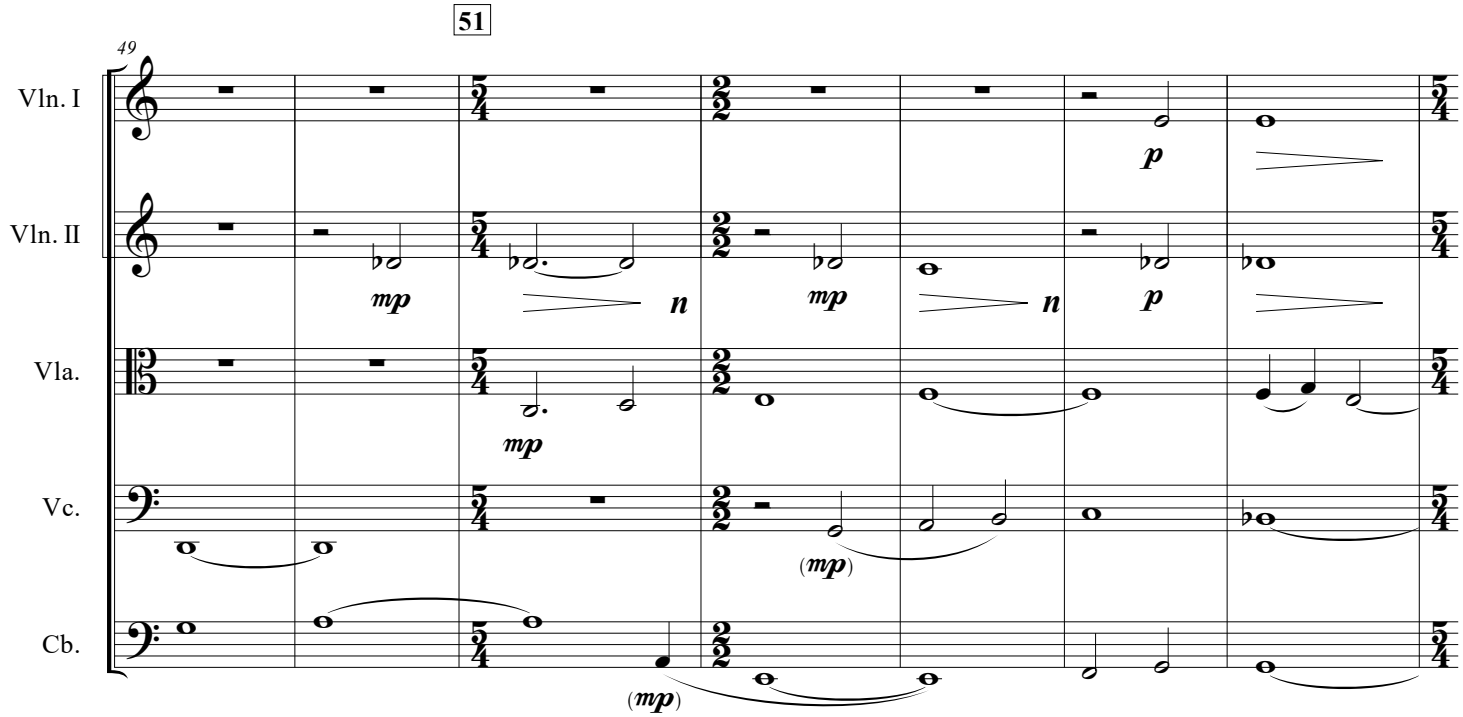

21
18
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
mp
p
pp

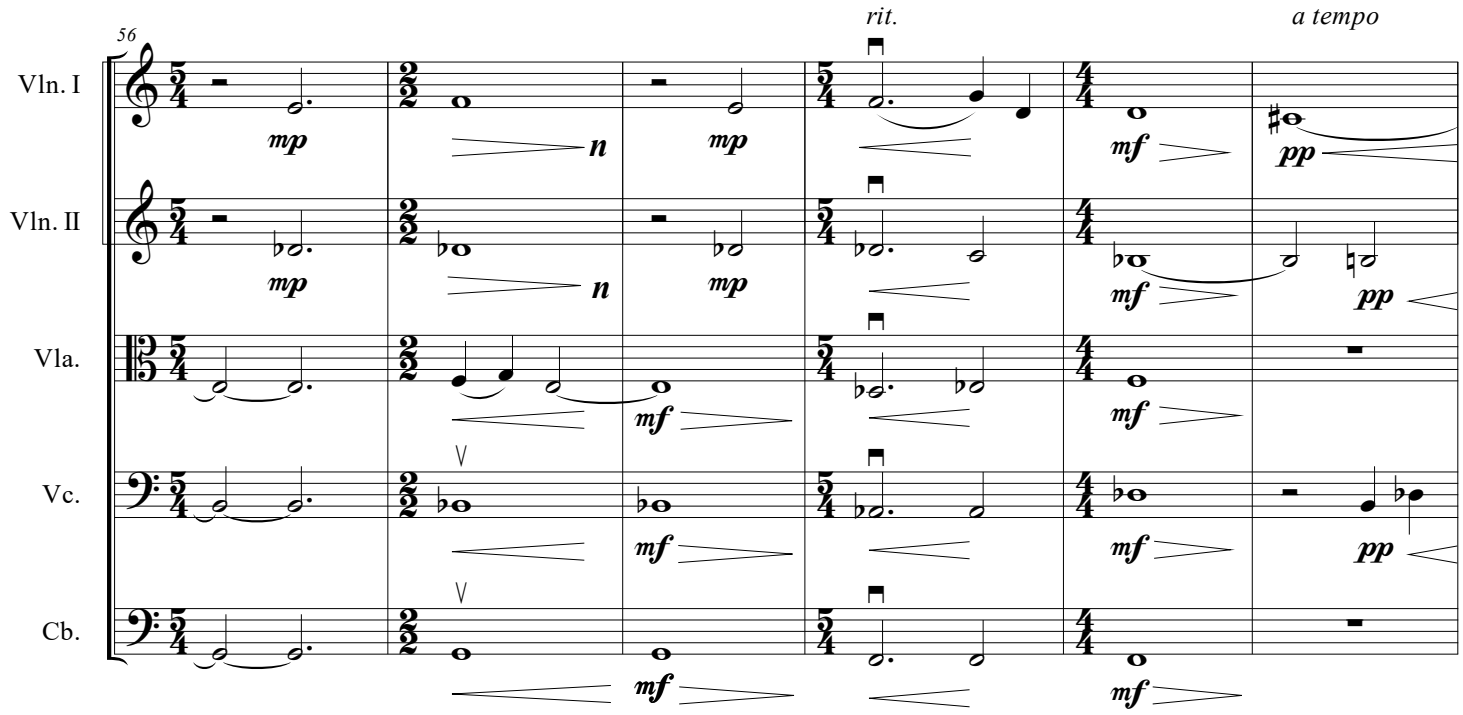

25
♩=80 Moving.
24
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
mp
p
Div.
tutti


rit.
33
♩=60 Full.
29
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
f
Div.
tutti

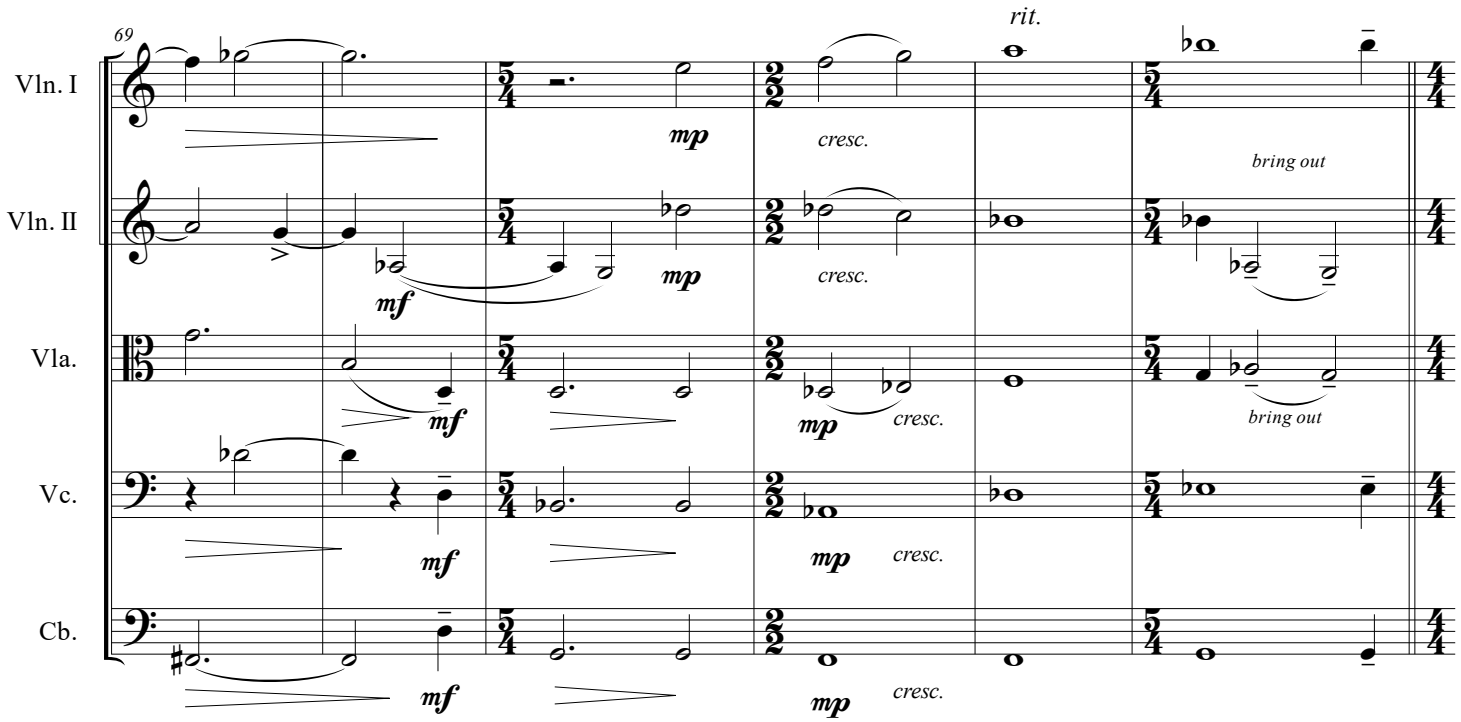

37
34
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
tutti
bring out
p
mf non dim.
mp non dim.
p


43
♩=80 Solemn. Chant-like.
41
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
pp
(pp)
mp

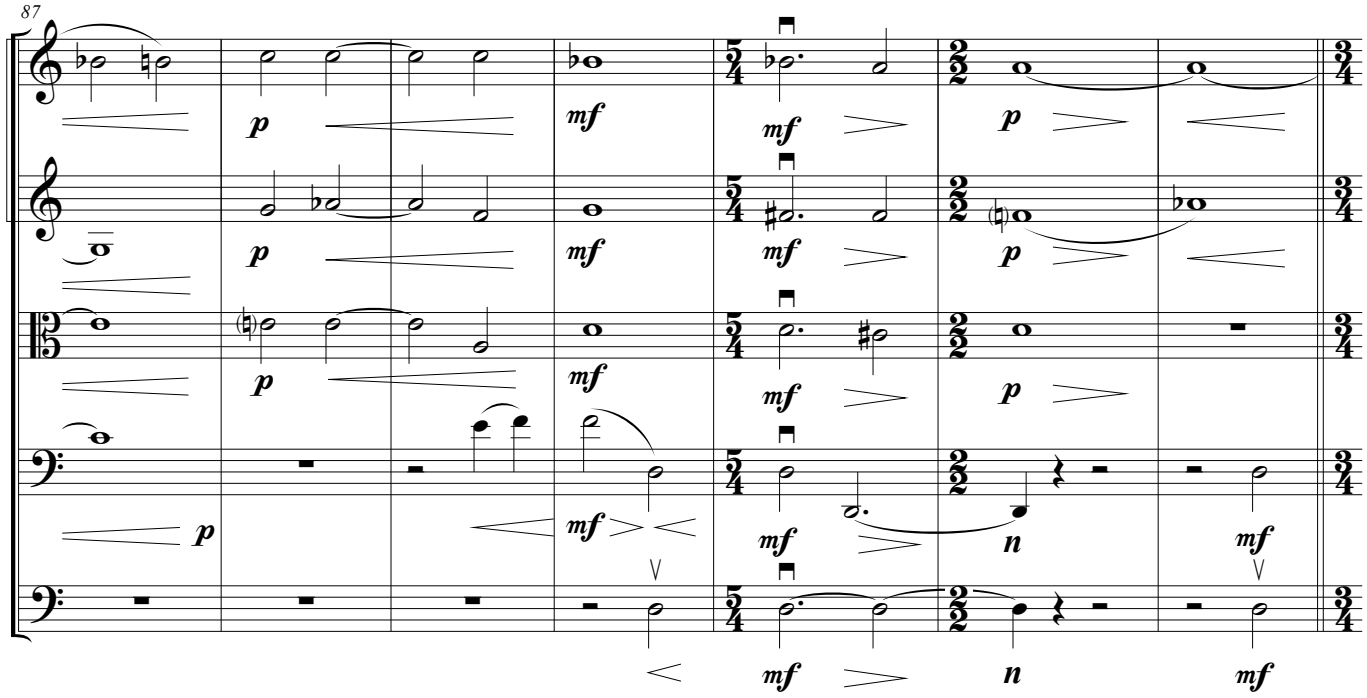

51
49
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
n
p
(mp)


56
rit.
a tempo
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
n
mf
pp


62
63
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
mf


69
rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
mf
cresc.
bring out

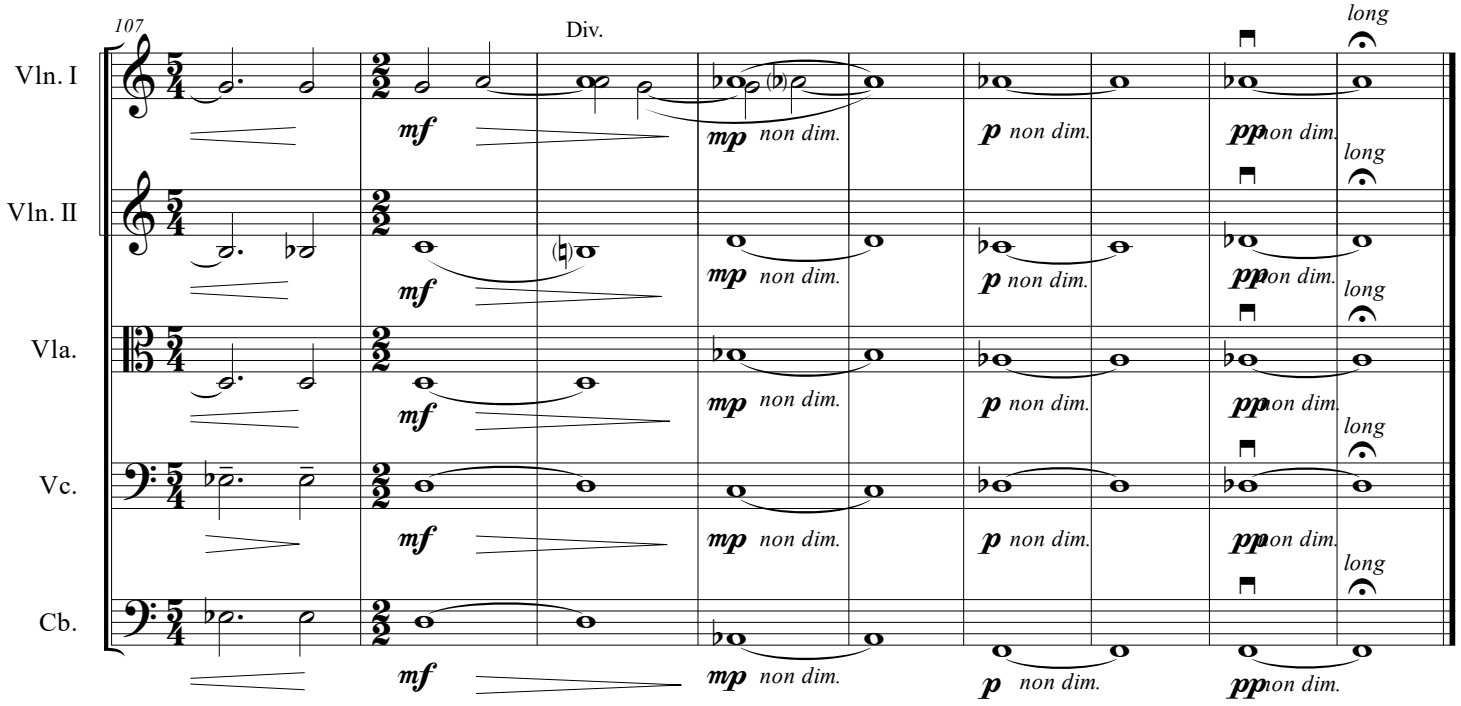

♩=60 Pleading.
Div.
75
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
81
rit.
Unis.
84
a tempo


87
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
mf
n


94
♩=80 Absolute.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
p
n

104


101
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
mf
mp
f


107
Div.
long
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
mp non dim.
p non dim.
pp non dim.

Ian Callen
MT 709
20 April 2020

The Communication of Theme through Motive and Harmony in *Why was I not made of Stone.* by Ian Callen

In Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Quasimodo poses the question "Why was I not made of stone like thee?"[1] to a gargoyle on the ramparts of the church as he watches Esmerelda ride off with Gringoire. Quasimodo wishes to experience the world as an invulnerable stone sentinel, but he is helpless and vulnerable to the intense despair and depression that he not only experiences in this scene, but throughout his life. That sentiment is the origin of the title of my work for string orchestra: *Why was I not made of Stone.*, which is, for the most part, the end of any strict allusion to Hugo. Some loose allusion is still used, mostly to portray the cathedral itself as a sort of framing device (the mimicry of sacred, choral textures for example), but any reference to the actual narrative of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is left vague and ambiguous so that listeners can more easily connect to the piece personally.

Practically speaking, *Why was I not made of Stone.* would be most at home in the middle of a concert program due to its length and the subdued nature of the piece's beginning and ending. It was composed with this in mind as it would serve well as a bridge between two larger works. At one point during its composition, *Why was I not made of Stone.* was twelve minutes long instead of its current and final 7:30 duration. However, I found this to be extraneous and working against the goals that I had in mind for the piece. Its purpose is to say something truly and universally human in such a way that individuals in the audience can connect with the piece

[1] Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (London: Global Grey, 2019), 403.

with their own specific experiences. It was my determination that for this work, a concise seven-and-a-half minutes was all the time needed to do so. A detailed analysis focusing on harmony and motive is necessary for a thorough explanation of *Why was I not made of Stone.*. In the analysis to follow I will move through the piece chronologically as I discuss various points of thematic or gestural importance and how they relate to the overall theme of restlessness.

Measures 1-24

Two main thematic pillars of the piece were introduced immediately: its pseudo-sacred quality and the inability to reach a point of rest or resolution. Allusion to sacred music is used to paint the picture of the Notre Dame cathedral and is achieved at the surface level through the mimicry of choral textures and the mindfulness of the basic principles of Fuxian counterpoint, although the laws of species counterpoint are not strictly followed. The purpose of employing a Fuxian style was to achieve a purity of sound, a clarity of independence, and a distinctly discernable fluctuation of consonance and dissonance.

At a more structural level, the opening features a large, but ambiguous plagal resolution that culminates on an A minor chord in m.13. The piece opens with a duet between the cellos and basses that mimics first and second species counterpoint, but breaks the restrictions on dissonance more often than not. Immediately after the entrance of the violas, a strong, grounded D minor triad is reached. The clarity of chords fluctuates from there until an A minor chord is reached in m. 13 creating plagal motion.

This large gesture is framed by several micro-events or motives that communicate the second defining characteristic: restlessness, or an inability to find resolution. This sentiment can be observed even in the first measure, which appears to be second species counterpoint. If it

were, the C# would be a permitted dissonance as long as it functions as a passing-tone. However, both intervals presented in m.1 are consonant, the C# false passing-tone leads the basses to a B in m.2 -- a 7th below the cellos. This breach of correct treatment of dissonance, an error in Fux, leads to a restart of the piece in m.3. This time the music is slower and more cautious, which allows for each harmony to be clearly perceived, but the error is repeated and, this time, accepted.

In m.4 the cellos and basses land on the same 7th, but instead of repairing the dissonance they slide about to various other dissonant intervals until the basses provide a consonant F# in m.6. One must consider that particular F# in the context of the D minor chord that occurs two measures later, as was discussed briefly above. The interchange of a major and minor third in a chord, or *mi* and *me* in a key is an important motive used throughout the entire work and for ease hereafter it will referred to as the Picardy motive. The F# is presented in m. 6, rejected in favor of a D minor chord in m.8. Then m. 10 features a quick, clear change between D major and D minor. The conflict between an F-sharp and F-natural is especially highlighted in the violas in mm. 7-10. Then in m. 11, the short skirmish immediately climaxes in a D split third chord, the effect of which is magnified by the fact that it is also the first tutti of the piece.

The exploration of dissonance carries on in order to elicit an emotional response from the listener and to convey a sense of distress or unease. Measure 12 continues the drama with not only the F-sharp and F-natural sounding together, but also an F major triad sounding against an F# major triad. This is a doubly important moment as both halves of the polychord (F# and F) were the subject of the previous tug-of-war between D minor and D major, i.e. F and F# were *mi* and *me*. Additionally, they function as tonic substitutes and therefore the plagal motion to Am in

m. 13 is not compromised. While the gesture is not compromised, the plagal moment is muddied by not only this chord, but also by the fact that D was previously tonicized. Additionally, m.13 is not a cadential point. A is not cemented until m. 14 in a quartal trichord with A as its root. The long crescendo, the unprecedented loudness, and the sudden loss of the low voices, which have been present up to this point, help to sell m.14 as an arrival point. However, it is an arrival point that sits awkwardly between consonant and dissonant. For all of these reasons that this chord and this measure define the harmonic language used to narrate conflict in the piece.

Measures 25-42

At m. 25, the momentum that was attempted at the beginning is recovered as the full ensemble plays an open, choral passage using a pentatonic collection with E as a tonal center. The pentatonic passage lasts until m. 29 and three of the four instances of pitches outside the scale can be explained as non-chord tones: a passing-tone F in the firsts (m. 26), a passing-tone F in the cellos (m. 27), and an anticipation in the seconds (m.28). The viola's B in m. 28 is not explainable as a non-chord tone, but is important and intentional. The viola line in mm. 26-28 imitates the bass line in the opening, not only in shape, but in that the third pitch, the expected resolution, is dissonant. Beat three of m. 28 reconciles the dissonance with a B minor chord in first inversion which in turn sets up a breakaway from the pentatonic harmonic language.

One important gesture from mm. 25-33 is the stepwise descent spanning a fourth, or lament bass.[2] In *Tonal Space in the Music of Antonio Vivaldi* by Bella Brover-Lubovsky, she says "Due to its emblematic power, the lament bass almost automatically invoked somber

[2] Bella Brover-Lubovsky, "Lament Bass" in *Tonal Space in the Music of Antonio Vivaldi* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 152.

affection, gravity, and oppressiveness."[3] This idiom is observable in music anywhere from Monteverdi (*Lamento della Ninfa*) to Purcell (*Dido's Lament*) to the Beatles ("Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds").

As mentioned above, the tonal centers of the passage move downward from E to D, then in m. 32 the basses highlight the deceptive cadence by playing a C# into a B, not resolving to D as the leading tone should. Therefore, although it is not the traditional descent from tonic to dominant, the full descent of a fourth, *fa* to *do* in B minor, exists first in the tonal centers, then in a quick plummet to *do* in the basses, i.e. beginning at the macro level and ending at the micro level.

At m. 33, the music continues to reiterate the idea of falling in stepwise motion, but most important is the clear statement of a lament bass figure played by the basses in mm. 34-38. The lament bass has occurred twice now in quick succession. From a Schenkerian perspective, the basses have at this point ripped the thematic idea of the lament bass from the background and claimed it as their own to exist in the foreground. Additionally, the E-flat to D that begins the second lament figure is a direct imitation of the bass part leading into the arrival at m. 33. The basses exert this newly-claimed dominance by guiding the key area and the harmonic language away from the clear D major which preceded and back toward the texture found at the beginning where they were featured.

Measures 43-63

As the texture returns to the chant-like duet between the cellos and basses, many aspects are reminiscent of the opening of the entire piece. The most notable likeness is the restart that

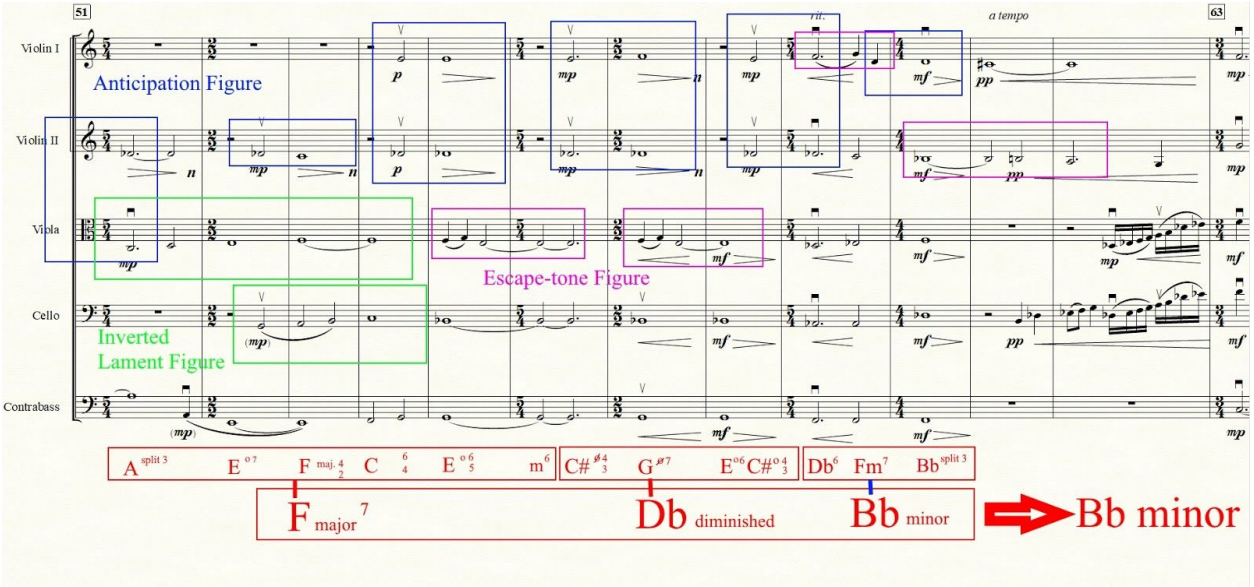
[3] Brover-Lubovsky, "Lament Bass" 153.

occurs in m. 46, but also important is the parallel motion from one dissonance to another (sliding fourths in m. 44 and m. 47) just as there was at the beginning with the parallel 7ths. The first notable difference, however, is in the upward direction of the lines. This inversion signals the piece has reached an emotional or programmatic low point, and is now attempting an ascent.

Three main motives are used to express an upward struggle and a cautious optimism. The first is an inverted lament bass, that is upward stepwise motion spanning a perfect fourth, which is found in the bass mm. 46-49, the viola in mm. 51-54, and the cellos in mm. 52-54. The second motive is an anticipation figure that pervades both violins starting at m. 51. The motive consists of a short upbeat, then a long downbeat, but not necessarily the same pitch (though they will not be more distant than a second). This figure will be used to eventually close the piece and is introduced here to indicate a desire for the success of the climb and an optimistic ending. The third motive consists of an escape-tone figure which will grow in importance, especially in the section to come at m. 75.

Harmonically, the concept of micro and macro layers is further explored at m. 51. Though the qualities of the tertian chords varies somewhat randomly, their roots work to spell a B-flat minor triad far in the background layer that lasts all the way from m. 51 to m. 60. The roots of the chords in mm. 51-55 are A, E, F, C, and E -- all members of an F major seven chord. Mm. 66-68's roots are C#, G, and E -- a C# (or D ♭) diminished triad. The following two measures consist of chords whose roots are D ♭ , F, and B ♭ -- a B ♭ minor triad. So on a secondary level, mm. 51-55 are an F, mm. 56-58 are a D ♭ , and mm. 59-60 are a B ♭ . All together they form a B ♭ minor chord. Furthermore, in contrast with the haphazard foreground harmony, the background harmonic progression of F to D ♭ to B ♭ is kosher root motion --

descending thirds.



The purpose of the harmonic difference between the foreground and background is to both personify the humanity of Hugo's character Quasimodo and comment on a universal human phenomenon: a struggle between difficult emotion and, to allude to the piece's title, the invulnerability of stone. Additionally, this section of the piece narrates an effort to climb out of a place of despair. The dissonant surface harmonies indicate an emotional and purely human struggle, while the less-obvious background is a sturdy scaffold of both order and indifference.

Finally, if one understands the entire section at m. 51 to belong to a background-level B ♭ tonic, the point of arrival at m. 63 becomes more meaningful. After a whole-tone scalar run which happens to be the first and only instance of sixteenth-notes in the piece, the culmination of the effort to climb to a place of stability and optimism, the music arrives at a large C major triad in m. 63. One can recall the importance of the downward second previously in the piece (ex. the pickup to m. 33 in the basses, and mm. 34-35 also in the basses), but now that motive is inverted just as the lament bass figure was inverted in the music leading up to this arrival.

Measures 63-74

The music at m. 63 is characterized by the development of the downward second motive that was introduced by both the basses earlier in the piece (pickup to m. 33 for example), and the use of the Picardy motive, or the fluctuation between major and minor qualities of the same chord (first seen in mm. 8-11). In fact, the motivic development in this section fuses the two ideas into a single entity which will now be called the half-step motive. For although they have been featured separately up to this point, theoretically they are the same idea: movement up or down by a second, only the Picardy motive requires a minor second. For example, in mm.63-64 the E must move to an E ♭ to change the quality from major to minor.

Measures 63-64 perform the crucial task of introducing the idea of the motivic development discussed above. Every part except the first violins clearly outline motion from C major to minor with the violas and cellos emphasizing the lowering of E to E ♭. The first violins intentionally do not participate in the harmony of the remaining parts, instead they play an F which in m. 64 is displaced by an octave and resolved to an E which splits the third in the otherwise C minor harmony, mimicking the similar gesture in mm. 8-11. Not only is the motion of F to E in m. 64 an example of the half-step motive, but the F in m. 63 connects to the G ♭ in m. 65 for an inversion of the same idea. The octave leap serves to separate the two iterations of the motive to make each separately identifiable in the texture.

After the split third on beat three of m. 64, the harmony becomes much less clear as the texture thereafter is much more motivically and imitatively driven. The further statements of the half-step motive begin to mimic the anticipation figure discussed previously in the analysis of the music at m. 51. One can observe the short upbeat, long downbeat figure in the second violin's,

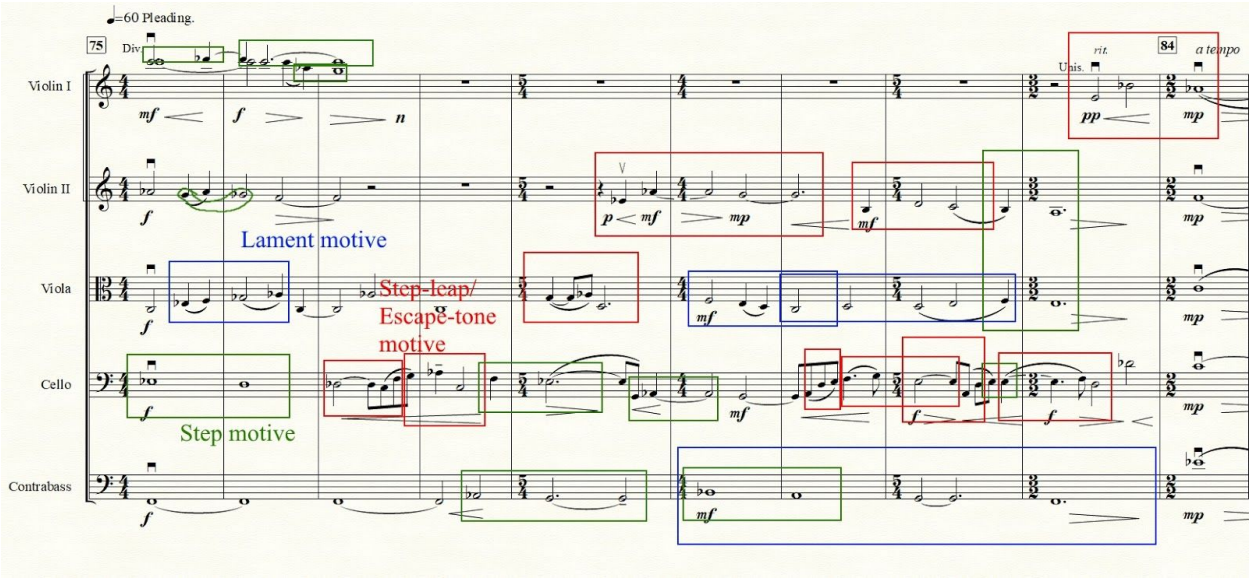
viola's, and cello's unison gesture in the pickup to m. 66. This unison gesture is echoed more strongly in the *tutti* unison pickup to m. 72 which abandons the imitation and pushes forward to the climactic arrival at m. 75.

There are three important aspects to observe in the three measures preceding the climax at m. 75 and all three are a direct reference to the buildup from m. 25 to the arrival at 33. One can recall that mm. 25-32 were characterized by motives existing in both the foreground and background as well as a scalar ascent to the arrival point. Likewise in this section before m. 75, the half-step motive not only pervades the foreground, but is also identifiable in the background. The initial example of the motive existing at the harmonic level in mm. 63-64 was already discussed, but another striking instance of the half-step motive existing in the background can be observed in m. 71 and m. 74. The unison half-note chord on beat four of m. 71 is an E diminished triad with both a major and minor 7th. This exceedingly dissonant harmony begins a scalar ascent in the first violins and connects to a clear and consonant E ♭ major chord in m. 74. This gesture is both a direct imitation of the E to E ♭ in mm. 63-64 and a continuation of the importance of background representation of important motives established in sections like m. 25 and m. 51. The potential sense of resolution at m. 74 is dissolved by the fact that the B ♭ in the first violins is a tritone against the E which started the ascent and the strong restatement of the half-step motive in the middle of the measure.

Measures 75-94

The E ♭ major chord in m. 74 moves to an F minor seven chord in m. 75 producing strong upward second harmonic motion that contrasts with the downward second in the actual bass part. This gesture imitates the way in which other points of arrival have been approached --

dramatically by step. Indeed m. 74 does this twice in a row, first in the seconds and violas, then with the remaining instruments in a pickup to m. 75. Harmonic analysis becomes less useful at this point as the music here is almost entirely created by the combination and manipulation of three distinct motives, only one of which is new, while the cellos begin an unprecedentedly soloistic lyrical line (m.77). The two familiar motives are the half-step and the lament bass figures; the new motive consists of three notes which form a step-leap figure. One clear example of this motive can be seen in the viola in m. 79 which forms an escape-tone figure, but it also appears in retrograde as can be seen clearly in the first violins in mm. 83-84. Below is a motivic analysis of mm. 75-84.



The section at m. 75 began with an F minor seven chord and is bookended by another in m. 84 which frames the expressive motivic texture between as a sort of contained outburst that offered little forward momentum to the narrative development of the piece as a whole. This effect is compounded by the absence of the first violins throughout the section. The melodic quarter and eighth-note subdivisions are lost at m. 84 in favor of a much more static,

harmonically-focused texture that lasts until m. 94. The harmony in this section is driven largely by the charging chord quality while retaining the same root, an idea that has proved to be a central pillar of the piece. This occurs twice within the surface-level harmony: the shifting from C minor seven to C minor-major seven to C major in mm. 87-88, and the shifting from D augmented to D major seven to D minor in mm. 91-92. A third instance can be found at a level one step further into the background. The chord roots in mm. 84-86 are F, D ♭ , and A which spell an F augmented triad. The following three measures' roots are C, A ♭ , and F: and F minor triad. Finally, three strong iterations of the anticipation figure occur in the low voices first as a pickup to m. 91, then again as a pickup into m. 94, and finally as a pickup into m. 102. As was the case earlier at m. 51, this gesture communicates a desire for the piece to come to an end. Whereas before this figure was heard in the violins, now it adopts a serious, bell-toll-like character in the cellos and basses.

Measure 94 to the End

Measure 94, just like the entire piece, begins with a duet. Although unlike the beginning, the duet is between the two violin parts and uses faster note values (quarter-note subdivisions). The lines descend stepwise in a loose imitation of the lament figure while adopting a new, chromatic quality more stylistically similar to the lament bass in pieces like Purcell's "Dido's Lament." This new texture is quickly brought to a halt as the violins drop out and the third and final bell toll sounds in the cellos and basses (m. 101). The violins cautiously re-enter when suddenly in m. 103 the cellos begin a second exposed lyrical line similar to their material in m. 77.

The ending focuses on illustrating the idea of futile resistance as an overarching theme of the work. The exposed viola part prior to m. 102 combined with the contrasting, lyrical nature of the cellos' material thereafter creates a clearer, more powerful sense of individualism than in any preceding section of the piece, rivaled only by the cello melody at m. 77. The cello line remains firmly and unambiguously in A minor until m. 107, even despite the A ♭ major chord in m. 105. In m. 107, however, all parts agree on a stable E ♭ major seven chord and unlike the similar E ♭ chord in m. 74, nothing happens to suggest the piece should go on. In fact, the entire ensemble plays the anticipation motive, the bell toll figure, that symbolizes the end.

Measure 108 to the end is a long decrescendo that contains very little motion. The most active part in this section is in m. 108 where the first violins provide a subdued restatement of their climactic material at m. 75, the height of resistance and emotional distress in the piece, now at a much lower range and dynamic, and only accompanied by sustained chords and a restatement of the step-leap motive in the second violins (mm. 108-111). All sense of motion and activity ceases at m. 112 as a D ♭ major-minor 7th chord sounds. Acceptance on behalf of the resisting individual would dictate that it should resolve to a G ♭ triad, however, the 7th moves rebelliously upward making the final chord D ♭ major which then fades out in an ambiguous display of either optimism and acceptance, or futility and continued resistance.

Conclusion

Writing this explanation of my work was a thoroughly perplexing task. I did not write *Why was I not made of Stone.* with the intention of it being my thesis piece, but here at the end of my time at Butler University I wholeheartedly believe that it is the most important work that I've written to date, as it is complex in both its conception and its emotional affect. My experience

coming back to the piece nearly a year after its completion to analyze and explain it was somewhat surreal as I was able to observe it with a bit of temporal distance. Not only did I learn about my own style, I was able to uncover things in the score that I did not necessarily intend at the time of composition. Upon examination, I am thoroughly convinced that the musical artifacts in the piece which I discovered and outlined in my above analysis are objectively observable.

However, this piece was not intended to be academic, but an emotional expression of an aspect of the human state that is very hard to describe. Arthur Conan Doyle came close in *The Lost World* when he wrote:

> Some believe what separates men from animals is our ability to reason. Others say it's language or romantic love, or opposable thumbs. Living here in this lost world, I've come to believe it is more than our biology. What truly makes us human is our unending search, our abiding desire for immortality.[4]

Likewise, I believe that this piece succeeds in communicating both the innate humanity in the futile search for a state of invulnerability and the intrinsic value and beauty of despair. It is neither optimistic or pessimistic but rides a fine line between the two without being nihilistic. The purpose of tragedy is not to provide some test of character, nor is it always the result of someone's failure. Indeed, just like Quasimodo, sometimes tragedy simply *is* and one must try to bear it without the armor of the gargoyles of Notre Dame.

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[4] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1998), 161.

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